



Happy New Year!

Governor Announces Preparedness Measures

Governor Mike Huckabee has instructed the Department of Health and Human Services to be prepared for a possible pandemic flu outbreak or other health related emergencies.

“With the lessons of Hurricane Katrina fresh on our minds, now is the time to aggressively examine how equipped Arkansas is to deal with a bird flu outbreak or any other type of statewide disaster,” Huckabee said.

A pandemic occurs when there is a global outbreak of a disease. A substantial part of the world’s population requires medical care and the health care system is overloaded during the crisis. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new strain of the influenza virus emerges and spreads rapidly around the world. An influenza pandemic in 1918 caused more than 500,000 American deaths and 40 million deaths worldwide. The last pandemic in 1968 caused the deaths of 70,000 people in the U.S. and 700,000 worldwide.

“Health experts agree that a new influenza virus could emerge at any time, and I have ordered the Division of Health to implement several measures to prepare for a possible pandemic flu outbreak or other health related emergency,” Huckabee said.

Those measures include:

- A DHHS internal workgroup has been charged with preparing a written pandemic flu plan.
- The division is in the late stages of the construction of an emergency operations center to coordinate health division response during a crisis.
- A Health Alert Network has been established to help the division communicate with the healthcare community about future scenarios.
- The Viral Laboratory capacity has been strengthened and construction continues on the new state of the art state health lab.
- A series of regional forums will be held around the state to involve community health, education and business leaders in pandemic planning.
- The governor and U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael Leavitt will host a statewide planning forum in early 2006.
- The creation of an antiviral stockpile to be used in the event of a pandemic outbreak

The governor will take the following steps to coordinate the emergency preparedness effort:

- A governor’s staff member will be assigned to coordinate the collection of emergency action plans such as earthquake, nuclear, major storm, epidemic, bio-terrorism and others from all state agencies.
- These plans will be reviewed and integrated into the work of DHHS.
- The governor will release a finished report by April 2006.

The DHHS Division of Health flu pandemic plan can be viewed at www.pandemicflu.gov.

DHHS Merchandise Now Available

If you are in the market for shirts, headgear and other accessories with the DHHS logo, check out the available items on the new DHHS Employee Apparel web site. Colleagues can access the site by clicking on the shopping for DHHS Merchandise link located under Employee Services on DHHS Gold. Submit your order form today and begin the year in style with your new DHHS merchandise!

Fitness Challenge Registration Begins Soon

Registration for the Arkansas Fitness Challenge between the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield will begin February 1. By signing up, you will not only help us win, but more importantly, you will be making a commitment to improving your health. As a leader in the Healthy Arkansas initiative, DHHS has an opportunity to lead by example in the fight against obesity and inactivity. Help **RED** beat **BLUE** and show what the new DHHS can do!

Make Healthier Choices in 2006 – Register for HELP

If you have thought about making changes to improve your health this year, consider registering for the Healthy Employee Lifestyle Program (HELP). This web-based program will allow you to monitor how many fruits and veggies you eat each day, whether you have smoked, and how frequently and what types of exercise you have done. The best part is that you can earn points for prizes including a water tote, a gym bag, a t-shirt, and a colored stretchy band. You can even earn points to redeem for time off from work! Register for HELP today and start taking steps to a healthier lifestyle for you and your family. Employees can get started by clicking on the Healthy Employee Lifestyle Program link under employee services on DHHS Gold.



War Memorial Fitness Center Offers Discount to DHHS Colleagues

The War Memorial Fitness Center in Little Rock offers a discounted rate to DHHS colleagues. The fitness center recently purchased new equipment and updated its facilities to provide a more comfortable and inviting workout experience. The center offers cardiovascular and weight machines, aerobic and aquatic classes and massage therapy. Other activities include basketball, table tennis and indoor and outdoor swimming. All fees must be collected and submitted by the **5th of each month** in order to receive the discount. Fees cannot be paid through payroll deduction.

Monthly Fees



Individual \$28.50	Without Discount \$37.50
Family of 2 \$40.67	Without Discount \$52.50
Family of 3+ \$43.25	Without Discount \$56.50

If you are interested in joining the fitness center and taking advantage of the discounted rate, contact [Felecia Moragne](#) at 661-2111.

Employee Benefits Division Provides Information Regarding Insurance ID Cards

With the start of the new health plan year, you might be wondering if you will receive a new medical or prescription ID card. If you made no changes during open enrollment, you will NOT get a new card and should continue to use the one you have. This also applies to pharmacy ID cards from NMHC Rx. However, if you DID make changes, you will get a new card in most cases. Please be sure to provide the new card at any physician/hospital visits.

QualChoice Issues New ID Cards Featuring Delta Dental Logo

Effective January 1, the preventive dental benefits for QualChoice HMO and POS plan members are being administered by Delta Dental. QualChoice members have the convenience of using their QualChoice ID card for both medical and preventative dental services. To find a participating dentist, visit Delta Dental's website at www.deltadental.com and choose the Delta Premier Network. Plan members will not get a separate Delta Dental ID card. Instead, the Delta Dental logo will appear on your QualChoice ID card.

In addition, the Employee Benefits Division has learned that some employees who were QualChoice plan members in the fourth quarter of 2005 but changed to another carrier for 2006 may have received new QualChoice ID cards in error. QualChoice will send letters instructing employees who received the cards in error to disregard and destroy them. For questions, contact QualChoice at 1-800-782-5246.

Staff Development Completes Supervisory Training Sessions for DOH Supervisors

Staff Development recently completed several months of time intensive supervisory training for all Division of Health (DOH) managers and supervisors. This training was an important step in the merger process and demonstrated the willingness of DOH and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) staff to work together to schedule all of the sessions and coordinate the regional videoconference sites.

The supervisory training was customized so that DOH supervisors learned DHHS personnel policies and processes and converted to the DHHS CLIP Plan at the same time. Training was conducted over a five-month period from June 13 to November 15. During this time, over 500 DOH supervisors completed all aspects of the training and maintained their eligibility for CLIP and supervision under DHHS policies.

Training consisted of 60 separate sessions held at 11 different locations including Russellville, Texarkana, Fayetteville, Forest City, Batesville, Arkadelphia, Monticello, Blytheville, and three sites in Little Rock. A total of 16 colleagues were involved in presenting these trainings and over 2000 work hours were invested, which does not include preparation and set up time.

By all accounts, the training was a success. Everyone worked together to complete the enormous task of training such a large number of people in a relatively short amount of time.

PCQ Process Nearing an End

Ensuring that 10,300 employees complete a Position Content Questionnaire (PCQ) was no small feat. For the past few months, over 50 employees have been busy assisting with the PCQ data collection process. Now, we are happy to report that the process is almost complete. Once all the PCQs are submitted, the Office of Personnel Management and Bureau of Legislative Research will begin the next phase of the Pay Plan Study.

A big thank you and congratulations to Jeanette Jones in the Division of Medical Services for being the first to complete the project. Special thanks also goes to Helen Ticey in the Division of Health for stepping in to meet the deadline for the project for the largest division. Thanks also to all employees who took the time to complete your questionnaire.



DHHS Around The State



KAIT Channel 8 in Jonesboro recently featured **Poinsett County** and their Christmas gift drive for needy children. According to Janice Griffin, Poinsett County Administrator, more than \$13,000 was raised. The shopping was done at a local Wal-Mart, which gave a ten percent discount and a monetary donation. The Weiner Girl Scout Troop assisted in the effort. KAIT followed the Poinsett County DHHS colleagues and the Girl Scouts as they shopped. The girls were given a list with numbers instead of names to protect the confidentiality of the recipients and \$50 to spend on each child. After the shopping trip, the girls sorted and bagged the gifts and stuffed stockings for the children. For their efforts, the Girl Scouts earned a badge. Griffin, whose daughter is a member of the troop, added, "It was a good lesson for the girls to learn in budgeting money and realizing not all children are as fortunate as most of them."



Five employees of the **Southeast Arkansas Human Development Center** traveled to Nashville, TN on December 10 to participate in a Taekwondo rank test. Antonio Davis, Beverly Davis, and Gwen Jones ranked for their yellow belts by demonstrating forms, fighting, and board breaking techniques. Instructor Mark Wargo ranked for 2nd degree black belt, and instructor Tiffany Wargo served as liaison between the students and examiners. Mark and Tiffany teach taekwondo at the Human Development Center as part of the Healthy Arkansas initiative. Participants in the class develop strength, balance, flexibility and aerobic fitness while learning the traditional Korean art.



Congratulations to....

Albert Marlar assumed his duties as the new County Administrator for Saline County on January 3. Marlar has over 30 years of experience with the Department of Health and Human Services. He has served as a County Administrator, an Area Director for the Division of County Operations and an Assistant Director for the Division of Children and Family Services.

Governor Mike Huckabee recently announced the appointment of the following DHHS colleagues.

- **Bernard Bevill** of Little Rock to the Central Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Commission. Bevill, radiation control section chief for the Division of Health, will serve until September 29, 2007.
- **Dick Wyatt** of Little Rock to the Information Network of Arkansas. Wyatt, the chief information officer for the Department of Health and Human Services, will serve at the will of the governor.

CDC Honors Division of Health Colleagues for Work in TB Control

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently recognized Division of Health (DOH) colleagues **Sandy Hainline**, RN, **Merlyna Chinglong**, Outreach Worker for the Marshallese Community, and **Michael Lewis**, Outreach Worker for Spanish Community, for outstanding efforts and dedication in support of research to control and prevent tuberculosis in northwest Arkansas.



Thanks to the work of State Epidemiologist **Dr. Frank Wilson** and Northwest Region Patient Care Leader **Pam Perry** and many others who contributed to this team effort, a local Tuberculosis Contact Investigation team was established in the region in 2002. The nurse coordinator and outreach workers provide interpreter and educational services, establish community alliances, provide insight into community and cultural factors and advise DOH regarding cultural issues. The acceptance and trust the team has achieved in the Marshallese and Hispanic communities is a major component in facilitating data collection. Through their outreach efforts, language and cultural barriers have been broken down to serve many more patients. Thanks for making a difference in how public health services are delivered.

Meet this Month's Featured Foster Children



Casey is active, impulsive and simply loves to play. His foster mom describes him as "a very sweet and polite child" who is willing to please and enjoys attending church with her. Casey and his older sister, Lindsey, came into foster care at the same time. However, they are not placed together. Casey must have a safe, secure family with a lot of stability, support, and nurturing family activities. A parent must provide structure, consistent parenting and logical consequences. Casey benefits from a parent who is active, calm, and patient. A family must be open to contacts with Casey's older sister, Lindsey.

Lindsey likes attention from adults. She is very loving, has a high need for acceptance and loves hugs. Lindsey is active and can be loud. Some of her favorite activities include video games, playing on the computer, roller-skating, bicycling and shopping. She is also very fond of animals, especially cats. Lindsey has won a blue ribbon in the Special Olympics for bowling. She likes school and does well most of the time. Lindsey needs nurturing, patient, and committed adoptive parents. It is very important that a parent be able to provide a stimulating environment with consistent structure and a predictable routine. A parent must be calm and be able to communicate with Lindsey on her level. Lindsey needs a great deal of attention from a parent and a family.



Do you have news you would like to share?

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